

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

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THE ANNUAL REPORT on Occupational Disease in California underlines an interesting fact—that more than three-fifths of the 499 occupational disease fatalities in the State's labor force of some eight million persons were due to cardiovascular conditions. This emphasizes the need for preventive programs in occupations which aggravate chronic illnesses.

Other causes of death were pneumoconiosis, toxic exposures, coccidiomycosis, tetanus, malignant neoplasms and emphysema.

These facts were drawn from the 27,255 physicians' reports of occupational disease reviewed in 1964. Two new categories, chemical burns and eye conditions attributed to toxic materials, were added to the Bureau of Occupational Health list.

To compare 1964 data with that of previous years, the 8,204 reports of cases in these new categories must be subtracted from the total. The remaining 19,051 physicians' reports represent a 6 per cent increase over the 18,060 reviewed the previous year.

Among the major industrial divisions, agriculture had the highest rate of occupational disease with 12.7 reports per 1,000 workers, followed by construction with 8.4, and manufacturing with 7.7. Within the manufacturing division, rates were prepared for production workers as well as for all workers in a given industry. The risk of occupational disease in manufacturing appears to be greater for production workers than that for all workers.

Skin conditions accounted for over 50 per cent of the 27,255 occupational disease reports received in 1964, eye conditions attributed to toxic materials for over 20 per cent, chemical burns for 10 per cent, respiratory conditions for nearly 5 per cent, and systemic poisoning about 3 per cent.

Diseases in the two new categories, chemical

burns and eye conditions due to toxic materials, accounted for almost one-third of the reports reviewed. An analysis of the 3,263 physicians' reports of these conditions received in the first half of 1964 indicated that a sizable reduction in these cases could result if preventive programs were directed toward those places of work using acids, caustics and alcohol solvents.

More than \$233 million in state and federal funds has been allocated for the construction of hospital and health facilities in California since the enactment of the Hill-Burton Hospital Survey and Construction Act 20 years ago. These funds have provided two-thirds financial assistance for the construction of 354 facilities containing 18,684 beds.

The funds have been used for general, tuberculosis and psychiatric hospitals, public health centers, rehabilitation facilities, diagnostic and treatment centers and long-term care facilities. Funds were allocated for the first time last year for community centers for the mentally ill and community facilities for the mentally retarded.

Each year the State Legislature has appropriated funds to match federal construction dollars. In 1946, \$3,912,320 in state and federal matching funds was made available. During the current fiscal year, approximately \$20 million in matching funds will be available.

The Hill-Burton legislation was enacted in 1946 to meet a critical hospital shortage following World War II. In recent years, program emphasis has shifted to meet the need for modernization and replacing health facilities in densely populated areas, and the construction of additional facilities and beds in rural and economically subnormal areas, Metropolitan and regional planning for facilities is also encouraged.